



**TOWN OF GRAFTON**  
**GRAFTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
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**MINUTES**  
**SCHOOL COMMITTEE**  
April 26, 2016  
Conference Room F  
7:00 p.m.

**Members Present:** Daryl Rynning, Chairman  
Laura Often, Vice Chair  
Peter Carlson, Secretary  
Maureen Cohen, Member  
Jennifer Connelly

**Student** Bianca Carangelo  
**Representatives:** Hannah Kelley

**Also Present:** Dr. James Cummings, Superintendent of Schools  
Daniel Gale, Finance Director

**Call to Order – Open Session**

- a. Chairperson's Update: None
- b. Community Groups and Citizens: None

**1. Educational Reports**

- a. **GMS School Improvement Plan:** Tim Fauth thanked the GMS School Advisory Council. Mr. Fauth said he continue to align district goals with school goals which helped with consistency. From a curriculum standpoint he felt they had come a long way to identify desired results, determine acceptable evidence and planned learning experiences and instruction. Mr. Fauth reviewed his goals. Goal #1 Curriculum: To ensure that the curriculum is aligned and taught as written. Goal #2 Teaching: Teaching all students to incorporate instructional strategies that maximize engagement and learning. Goal #3 Student Voice: To involve students as citizens of Grafton Middle School. Goal #4 Family Engagement; To increase the level of active participation on the part of every family in the classroom and school community. Mr. Fauth gave a brief outline of each individual goal. This year they added four additional after school clubs, bringing them up to twenty three. A parent survey done in Feb/March which was successful. Communication through teachers was growing. Many teachers have their own web pages giving parents insight to on goings in the classroom. Mr. Fauth said they made significant jumps in MCAS last year, he felt he was fortunate to have an outstanding staff at GMS and an outstanding group of

students. Mrs. Rynning asked how many students participation in clubs? Mr. Fauth didn't have the exact numbers but said most programs were full; it depended on the topic of the club. Mrs. Rynning said the tri curricula collaboration makes a huge impact on students, she was glad to see this. Mrs. Connelly asked if tri curricula would be done in other grades. Mr. Fauth said getting a topic rich enough and engaging was challenging, but they were looking into it. Mrs. Rynning felt communication had improved; she had received positive comments on this. Mrs. Connelly said it was her child's first year there, and the communication was great. Mrs. Often noted that the transition to middle school had improved as well.

GMS School Report: Nancy Athanas 7<sup>th</sup> grade English Language Arts teacher and students Sadie Curtis, Lauren Welch and Danae Harper were present to discuss the 6 Traits Professional Development Model (Writing & Collaborative Learning Initiatives.) In 2013 a writing committee was formed and by the end of 2014 6 traits was the unanimous decision for implementation. The concept was not a program or curriculum but an assessment guide and tool for writing, using the writing process. It created a shared vocabulary for students and teachers. 6 Traits linked reading and writing. Students learn from reading aloud and discussing the writing. They learn from seeing models and discussing writing models. Mrs. Athanas felt 6 traits influenced writing and reading and taught students how to utilize resources.

Tasha Gamble, a GMS Science Teacher discussed the collaborative learning (COLT) strategies. In January they were asked to choose two collaborative strategies and implement them into the classroom. They would be learning as they go, and she was happy that Mr. Fauth gave such flexibility, it was great. They were piloting 2 COLT strategies. One was Flipping the Classroom and in her model, students were able to be fully engaged in their learning at their own pace. If a student missed a class they could go to her web page, find the lesson and listen to the lecture therefore not missing a beat. Ms. Gamble felt this made her more of a facilitator as students became more actively involved in their learning. Also discussed was Split Room Debate; this increased students' engagement and allowed them to make connections to the material. It also allows students to learn by teaching each other and allowed for instant teacher feedback to correct misconceptions. Ms. Gamble felt this was very positive for the students; they were more engaged and were invested in their learning. Students are excited to learn from each other and prefer it over traditional teacher-centric class teaching. Mrs. Rynning asked if the students had skills to collaborate or were they taught the skill. Ms. Gamble has to teach them collaboration in the beginning of the year and they run with it from there. Ms. Carangelo liked the concept of the flip classroom, from a student's point of view it's not as boring, she saw students more willing to focus and learn. Mrs. Often was excited about the flip classroom concept, for her it was a fabulous idea. The little bit of independence they get with this is helpful to students. It was also noted that data had sown assessment had gone up. Mrs. Cohen asked how teachers decide on strategies. Ms. Gamble said there was a book of strategies, teachers shared their thoughts and ideas and then they chose.

## 2. General Business

- a. Senator Michael Moore was present to give an update on the house budgets. He noted that state wide the governor's budget included an increase to Chapter 70 of 1.6% based on a \$20.00 per pupil increase. The FY17 House Ways & Means appropriation increased Chapter 70 by 2.3%. Senator Moore noted that the district had not seen a decrease since 2009; they were continuing to support school districts. He reviewed the House Ways & Means budget which included increases in investments in Chapter 70, special education, kindergarten expansion grants, student transportation, grant programs that target at risk students and child care for income eligible families. The budget also included funds for items such as circuit breaker special education reimbursement, regional school transportation reimbursement and Charter school reimbursements. Senator Moore discussed a new administration initiative for the four vocational schools in the district; noting the waiting list had increased substantially for enrollment. The budget had an increase which will offset costs for member districts. The funds would be provided over 5 years and be used for equipment in order to expand the technical education programs, work based learning grants and to expand and replicate STEM. Mr. Moore reviewed a copy of the Charter School bill. The referendum on the November ballot would increase the cap on charter schools. Noting it did not address the foundation budget. Senator Moore said if passed in November, it would be implemented in 2019 and the Charter school increase would also be implemented in 2019. He also stated if a Charter School were to come into the district they would need the approval of the local boards. The bill makes charter school a local option and if approved by DESE, and the school committee rejects it, the State would have to pick up the costs. Mrs. Rynning would like Senator Moore to keep them informed and share any additional information he may have as this moves forward. She thanked Senator Moore for attending this evening.

## b. Collaborative Report - none

## 3. School Committee Member Reports

- a. Mrs. Cohen gave an update relative to A Day on the Hill. She, Mrs. Connelly and Mrs. Often attended. They received a lot of good information and were able to witness the chamber in session which was unique. Mrs. Often thanked Representative Muradian and Senator Moore stating Grafton was very fortunate to have their support, they were very pro education. She had MASC handouts and would share with all the members. Mrs. Often would like to add to a future agenda, discussion relative to the ballot question and its impact on Grafton. Mrs. Cohen, Mrs. Rynning and Mr. Carlson agreed, this was a worthwhile topic and an important one to discuss, possibly in the Fall. Mrs. Rynning felt it would be the School Committee's job to communicate information to the public, possibly meet with the Board of Selectmen as well.
- b. Mrs. Cohen reminded all that Wednesday was the first walk and bike to school day. She was excited to participate.

4. Superintendent's Report
  - a. District Update - Dr. Cummings thanked Dawn Geoffrey for her work on the walk to school program. He thanked her for her continued support. An updated list of activities was distributed to all members. Dr. Cummings recognized two donations; Donna Stock donated \$500 towards school work program. And Teradyne Inc donated \$100 in memory of Theresa Lojko. Dr. Cummings said the DECA students were currently attending the international competition in Nashville, returning Thursday. There were no results yet, but he was sure they are representing us exceeding well. May 14<sup>th</sup> was the annual Fun Fair and they were still looking for volunteers.
5. Future Agenda Planning:
  - a. Mrs. Rynning reminded members that their Superintendent evaluations were due in by May 3<sup>rd</sup>.
6. Approval of Minutes – None
7. Financial Report
  - a. A motion was made by Ms. Carangelo that the School Committee approve Warrant #44, dated April 28, 2016 in the amount of \$425,123.05. Motion seconded by Mr. Carlson. Motion Carried 5-0 School Committee and 2-0 Student Representatives.
8. Policy:
  - a. Section G Personnel, GBAA: Harassment and Bullying Policy. A motion was made by Mr. Carlson to accept GBAA Harassment and Bullying Policy as a second reading as presented. Motion seconded by Mrs. Often. Motion carried 5-0 School Committee and 2-0 Student Representatives.
9. Correspondence – None
10. Executive Session – At 8:30 p.m. a motion was made by Mr. Carlson to enter into executive session for the purpose of non union negotiations under Chapter 30A, Paragraph 21, Section A, to conduct strategy sessions in preparation of discussions with non union personnel and to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with non union personnel. Motion seconded by. By Roll Call Peter Carlson, Aye; Maureen Cohen, Aye; Jennifer Connelly, Aye; Laura Often, Daryl Rynning, Aye. Motion carried 5-0. The Committee will return to open session to adjourn only.

Respectfully submitted

  
Cindy Ide, Recording Secretary

Grafton Public School  
School Committee Meeting Minutes